

consumer news

CB thefts

An increase in CB radio thefts is possible with the introduction of 40-channel sets. **Federal Communications Commission** (FCC) recommends installing a protection alarm or removing units when car or truck is unattended. Record serial number appearing on all 40-channel sets report any CB theft to local police, not to the FCC.

Professional guidance is recommended when mounting CB antennas on any fixed structure. Over 200 electrocution deaths during 1973-76 resulted from inexperienced persons mounting antennas on metal masts or poles where the antenna might contact power lines.

Consumer council

President Ford, by Executive Order 11948, has continued the existence of the **Consumer Advisory Council** until Dec. 31, 1978. Federal Advisory Committee Act of Oct. 6, 1972, says Federal advisory boards, committees & councils cease to exist after 2 years unless renewed by the President. President Ford's Executive Order was dated Dec. 21, 1976. Consumer Advisory Council was established in relation to the **Office of Consumer Affairs** (OCA) by President Nixon's Executive Order 11583.

More aid for deaf

Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has installed a TV-phone system for deaf & hearing-impaired persons. Purpose is to make FCC information as accessible to the deaf as to anyone else in the community. For example, if the deaf person has a compatible teletypewriter in his/her home & wants to know something about connecting privately owned equipment to company-owned telephones, he/she should dial FCC's special number (202-632-6999) to receive a print-out.

System also can be used to complain to FCC about telephones, television, radio or other communication systems regulated by FCC.

Amtrak (National Railway Passenger Corp.) already has had a reservation system for the deaf [CONSUMER NEWS: April 1, 1976].

Metric nominations

President Ford has nominated Virginia Knauer, Special Assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs, to a 2-year term as a member of the US Metric Board. The 17-member Metric Board was created by Congress as part of the Metric Conversion Act of 1975 [See CONSUMER NEWS Dec. 1, 1976].

The President had originally announced the nominations last fall, but Congress was not in session. He resubmitted his choices to the Senate on Jan. 6.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
Office of Consumer Affairs
Virginia H. Knauer, Director

Vol. 7, No. 2, Jan 15, 1977

Mrs. Knauer leaves

Virginia H. Knauer will leave the position of Special Assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs and Director of the **Office of Consumer Affairs** (OCA) on Jan. 20. At that time, Michael A. Sterlacci, OCA Deputy Director, will become Acting Director.

President Nixon appointed Mrs. Knauer on April 9, 1969, to the Special Assistant position & to be the Executive Secretary of the President's Committee on Consumer Interests (PCCI), which had been established by President Johnson. By Executive Order on Feb. 24, 1971, President Nixon created the Office of Consumer Affairs in the **Executive Office of the President** to replace PCCI. He named Mrs. Knauer to be the OCA Director. On Jan. 25, 1973, President Nixon transferred OCA from the White House to the **Health, Education & Welfare Dept.**, with Mrs. Knauer continuing as Director in addition to her Special Assistant position at the White House.

In August 1974, President Ford continued OCA & reappointed Mrs. Knauer as Special Assistant & OCA Director.

Mrs. Knauer has been the third Special Assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs. The first was Esther Peterson, 1964-1967, & the second was Betty Furness, 1967-1969.

A history of OCA—covering Mrs. Knauer's 8 years in office—is available free from History, Office of Consumer Affairs, Washington, DC 20201.

Dear Consumer:

In April 1971—2 years after I took office—I wrote my first "Dear Consumer" letter in this newsletter to introduce CONSUMER NEWS, the new, interagency newsletter published by my **Office of Consumer Affairs** at the direction of President Nixon.

During the almost 6 years of publication, we have expanded the newsletter from a monthly to a twice-a-month publication, & we have doubled the number of pages—primarily to provide the CONSUMER REGISTER supplement.

Your acceptance of CONSUMER NEWS, through your subscriptions, makes it one of the highlights of my 8-year tenure as Special Assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs & Director of the Office of Consumer Affairs.

I hope that you will continue to find CONSUMER NEWS beneficial, & let my successor hear from you.

Sincerely,



Recalls

RUBBED SAGE & POULTRY SEASONING—Food & Drug Administration (FDA) announces recall of following brands of seasoning manufactured by Frank Food, Inc., Cincinnati, OH: Rubbed sage labeled Franks, Nugget, Code, Holleb's, Red & White, Nifda, American Inn, Freeman, Host Favorite, Frosty Acres, All Kitchens, Ryser's, Parde, Community Club (Code G271-G290); poultry season labeled—Franks, Nugget, Code, Red & White, Nifda, Host Favorite, Plee-Zing & Frosty Acres (Code G282/G292).

Reason for recall: Products are rodent and insect contaminated.

BROCHURES—Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announces recall of 15 different pieces of literature used by Pure Water Society, Inc., Lincoln, NE, to promote the sale of water stills. A "water still" is a device to purify tap water in a home or office that can be connected to the water supply. Stills cost between \$200 & \$848. The stills are not being recalled—only the brochures. FDA says the literature tries to link drinking of tap water with cancer & other diseases & carries titles such as: "... Probe U.S. Water for Cancer Threat . . ." "Drinking Water—It Can Be Dangerous . . ." "The Water Story . . Raw Tap Water . . ." & "All Life Depends on Water . . ."

• **TIRES**—Dunlop Tire & Rubber Corp. of Buffalo, NY, announces recall of 658 size HR78-14 Dunlop Gold Seal & Remington Cushion-Aire belted radial tires carrying **Transportation Dept.** serial numbers DBMCA18366 & DBMCE22366, respectively. Tires are being recalled because of a defect that could result in tire or belt separation at sustained high speed. Tire may thump & vibrate &, if not heeded, may cause sudden loss of air that could result in an accident. Known owners are being notified by mail. Other owners should return tires as soon as possible to the nearest Dunlop or Remington sales outlet where they will be replaced free of charge until Dec. 31. After that, normal prorated adjustment charges will apply.

• **TIRES**—Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. of Akron, OH 44316 announces recall of 150 Goodyear FR78-14 custom tread steel belted radial tires with the following identification: MFL8DWT446, press number B18R or B18L. Because the tires received a shorter cure than specified, tires may show abnormally fast &/or irregular tread-wear in service. Under extreme service conditions tire failures & vehicle crash could occur. What to do: Return tires to dealer for replacement.

Seasonal buying

Last month *Consumer Sense* (a publication of the Chase Manhattan Bank) published an all-year buying calendar provided by the National Retail Merchants Association. The calendar gives you an idea of the best time to buy certain goods at exceptional savings.

With the permission of *Consumer Sense*, CONSUMER NEWS is passing this to you.

JANUARY: Bedding, white goods, beachwear; sportswear; costume jewelry; handbags; men's shirts; shoes; coats; furs; home furnishings; furniture; rugs & other floor coverings; storm windows; small appliances; china & glassware; sound equipment (radios, stereos, etc.); toys; bicycles; used cars.

FEBRUARY: Sportswear; housewares; curtains; draperies; lamps; china; silverware; rugs; sound equipment; toys; air conditioners; used cars.

MARCH: Housewares; china & glassware; garden supplies.

APRIL: Sleepwear; lingerie; hosiery; fabrics; women's shoes.

MAY: Home furnishings; outdoor furniture; luggage; jewelry; white goods.

JUNE: Bedding; sleepwear; lingerie; hosiery; men's & boy's wear; women's shoes; furniture; floor coverings.

JULY: Furs; fabrics; furniture.

AUGUST: Bedding; white goods; furs; furniture; new cars (outgoing year's models).

SEPTEMBER: China & glassware; men's & boy's wear; sporting goods; new cars (outgoing year's models).

OCTOBER: Evening wear; coats; outerwear; skiing supplies; home furnishings; furniture; major appliances.

NOVEMBER: Blankets; white goods; china & glassware; silverware; shoes; women's coats; toys; major appliances; bicycles; used cars.

DECEMBER: Beachwear; blankets; children's clothing; women's & children's coats; children's hats; men's & boys' suits; men's shoes; toys (last year's models); used cars; Christmas cards (usually half-price right after Christmas).

Supreme Court says

The Supreme Court has ruled that it is not unconstitutional to deny Social Security benefits to a divorced woman for the care of a dependent child—based on the ex-husbands accumulated benefits. The decision overturned a ruling by a three-judge Federal court in Illinois which held that a provision in the Social Security Act violated the 5th amendment rights of divorced women.

Act provides that a married woman may collect benefits if the husband is eligible for benefits, if they have been married at least 20 years & if the wife is caring for a dependent child. Law says a divorced woman must be at least 62 or disabled before she can receive benefits for dependent children.

For copies of the decision (Mathews vs De Castro; 75-1197) write US Supreme Court Clerk's Office, Washington, DC 20543; phone: 202-393-1640.

The Supreme Court has ruled unanimously that **Internal Revenue Service** (IRS) agents may not search a taxpayers home or office without a warrant for the purpose of seizing property to satisfy income tax assessments.

The court ruled that while the tax law permits the seizure of property for the payment of taxes, the law must not be construed to allow unreasonable intrusions of privacy, which are prohibited by the Fourth Amendment.

Ruling came in a case in which IRS agents had a locksmith break into a Utah businessman's office to seize property to satisfy tax obligations.

(Copies of Supreme Court decisions are usually available from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402, at various prices, which are based on the lengths of the decisions).

FTC investigates

Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has issued a complaint against Montgomery Ward & Co. for violation of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act for failing to tell credit applicants why they were denied credit. Marcor Inc., Ward's parent corporation, was also cited.

When people ask why their credit applications are rejected, they are told the company uses a point scoring system & they did not have enough points to qualify for credit—no specific reasons are given.

FTC's proposed order in the complaint will require Ward's to disclose the four most significant factors in denying credit under a point scoring system to future applicants & all applicants who were denied credit & requested reasons from Jan., 30, 1976, through the effective date of the order.

Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has authorized its Chicago Regional Office to conduct an industrywide investigation to determine whether consumers are subjected to unfair or deceptive acts or practices in connection with the sale of memberships in buying clubs.

FTC's investigation will include any buying club, purchasing service or other profit-making organization selling memberships that claim to allow consumers to purchase products below retail prices & will include inquiries into:

- Organization & operations of buying clubs.
- Advertising & sales representations by buying clubs to consumers.
- Nature & extent of the benefits provided by buying clubs to members.
- Extent to which consumers are furnished with complete & accurate information regarding services provided.

All interested persons are encouraged to contact the Chicago Regional office regarding their experiences in the above area. Written comments should be sent to the Federal Trade Commission, 55 East Monroe, Rm. 1437, Chicago, IL 60603.

Federal Trade Commission (FTC) will be investigating whether adequate cost information is being provided to prospective life insurance purchasers.

FTC said the investigation is designed to determine:

- Whether & to what extent cost information provided prospective purchasers is now insufficient.
- What types of comparative cost disclosures would be most accurate & most likely to be useful to consumers.
- Impact such disclosures would be likely to have upon the industry and upon consumers.
- What would be the most appropriate & feasible course of action for the Commission to take in this area.

New Federal publications

Bark Mulch, published by **Forest Service** (#001-000-03454-5). 60¢ from Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402.

Directory of Consumer Organizations: A Selected Listing of Nongovernmental Organizations at Local, State & National Levels, published by **Office of Consumer Affairs**. Free from Consumer Directory, Office of Consumer Affairs, Washington, DC 20201

Excerpts from Creating Energy Choices for the Future, published by **Energy Research & Development Administration**. Free from Energy Research & Development Administration, Washington, DC 20545

Guide to Federal Consumer Services (revised), published by **Office of Consumer Affairs**. Free from Guide, Pueblo, CO 81009

Education foundation

At CONSUMER NEWS' deadline, Virginia Knauer, Special Assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs & Director of the **Office of Consumer Affairs** (OCA), was expected to hold a news conference on Jan. 17 to release a proposed plan for the establishment of a national foundation for the advancement of consumer education in schools, community services & programs for people out of school.

The report—*A Proposal for 1977: A National Foundation for Consumer Education*—includes surveys & evaluations that point conclusively to the inadequate development of consumer education & the fact that almost two-thirds of the US adult population perform less than proficiently as consumers. The results of an earlier study—1975—of consumer mathematics achievement [CONSUMER NEWS: Aug. 1, 1975] prompted Mrs. Knauer to say that many consumers "do not have the math skills necessary to solve the day-to-day purchasing problems we face in today's economy."

As proposed, the private, non-profit foundation—a project of government, business, industry & labor—would act as a clearinghouse & research center for existing consumer education information & would dictate new research directed toward improving consumer education.

Mrs. Knauer was expected to urge the new Administration create the foundation this year.

At the news conference, Mrs. Knauer was also expected to release the findings of Phase II of a study of consumer complaint-handling mechanisms of 7 Federal agencies involved in providing goods, services, &/or benefits to consumers. CONSUMER NEWS will report on the highlights of that study next month.

Consumers & utilities

A section of the Energy Conservation & Production Act [CONSUMER NEWS: Sept. 15 & Dec. 15, 1976] provides for the establishment & operation of state consumer offices to assist consumers with presentations before utility regulatory commissions.

Section 205 of the law allows the **Federal Energy Administration** (FEA) to make grants to a state for the creation of these offices, which must be wholly independent of the utility commissions. Offices will be empowered to:

- Make assessments of proposed rate increases & their impacts on consumers.
- Help consumers present their positions before the regulatory commissions.
- Advocate positions that are determined to be most advantageous to consumers.

Recalls

• **TELEVISION SETS—Food & Drug Administration (FDA)** announces recall of 979 Model 7810 color TV sets, manufactured during July & August 1971 by JVC America, Inc., Maspeth, NY. Sets carry serial numbers 10340001 through 10340700 & 11340701 through 11340979. Reason for recall: radiation exposure rates exceeded performance standard limits.

• **PLASTIC STRIPS—Food & Drug Administration (FDA)** announces recall of 72,000 bottles of Clinistix, plastic strips used by diabetics to test their urine for sugar. Strips are being recalled by manufacturer, Ames Co., Elkhart, IN, & are identified by the following lot numbers listed on top of the label of the product: 114006, 2175046, 1175046, 2202046 & 1203046. Tests show that about 15% of the strips may give false positive results—that is, they may show the presence of sugar in the urine when none actually is there. Such a false result may encourage a diabetic to increase the dosage of insulin & suffer an insulin reaction.

Calendar

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• **PRODUCT SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL—Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)** announces a public meeting with the following agenda: Discussion of public participation in CPSC activities with specific emphasis on the proposed **Office of Public Counsel** & implementing guidelines for funding of public participation; review of the **National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS)**; & discussion of rental of consumer products. Persons wishing to make oral or written presentations to the commission should notify—at least 5 days before the meeting—the Secretary, Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC 20207; telephone: 202-634-7700.

Time & place of meeting:

Jan. 25 (9 a.m. to 5 p.m.) & Jan. 26 (9 a.m. to 4 p.m.)
Third Floor Hearing Room
Consumer Product Safety Commission
1111 18th St., NW
Washington, DC

Details—*Federal Register*: Dec. 29, page 56681.

• **ENERGY-SAVING CONSUMER PRODUCTS—Energy Research & Development Administration (ERDA)** announces public meeting to discuss the Fed-

eral Government's plans to develop energy-efficient appliances, lighting systems, space heating & cooling equipment & other consumer products. This is the first in a series of meetings to acquaint potential contractors & the general public with ERDA's national program to develop these products.

Feb. 3 (8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.)
Quality Inn Capitol Hill
415 New Jersey Ave., NW
Washington, DC

(For information, call or write Eldon G. Ehlers, Office of Conservation, Energy Research & Development Administration, Washington, DC 20545; telephone: 202-376-4590.)

• **RADIOACTIVE CONSUMER PRODUCTS—Food & Drug Administration (FDA), Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) & Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** are sponsoring symposium on public health aspects of radioactivity in consumer products:

Feb. 2-4
Georgia Institute of Technology
Atlanta, GA

For information, call Dr. A. Alan Moqghissi: 404-894-2375, or Dr. Peter Paras: 301-443-2374.

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